UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Graduate Conductors

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 7:30 pm | Tribute Communities Recital Hall, 83 York Blvd

The UTSO concerts are made possible in part by a generous gift from Neville Austin.

PROGRAM

Tannhäuser Overture

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Peter Min, *conductor*

Fantasy on a Theme by Beethoven

Larysa Kuzmenko (b. 1956)

Emma Colette Moss, *conductor*
By arrangement with Counterpoint Music Library Services.

Finlandia

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Toby Moisey, *conductor*

El salon México

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Matheus Coelho do Nascimento, *conductor*
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We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (UTSO)

Violin I
Simon Hauber, *concertmaster*
Bridget Alexander
Samantha Cardwell
Marija Ivicevic
Sharon Jin
Lauren Da-Hyun Lee
Helen Li
Natasha Morozova
Kwan Heng Vincent Poon
Monica Lakshmi Vipanchi Rallabhandi
Sophie Reimer-Epp
William Sale
Kasey Scoboria
Audrey Sung
Mizuki Yaesawa

Violin II
Siri Ducharme-Leblanc, *principal*
Katherine Chen
Caleb Chiu
Melie Inageda
Aura Kwon
Selen Nsabiyeze
Esther Emari Van Rooi
Christine Yanfei Wang
Deborah Alexandra White
Nicole Woo
Esther Yao
Pely Yau
Qiqi Zhang

Viola
Meika Sonntag, *principal*
Tony Chen
Ji-A Choi
Gavin Li
Gabriella Caitlyn Liu
Colman Yang
Tate Zdanowicz

Cello
Tuuli Olo, *principal*
Antonia Cambre
Daniel Ulloa Garcia
Maren Helyar
Jill Liang
Caitlyn Liu
Chloe Shin
Mariana Pit Torres Siebiger

Double Bass
Benjamin Kemppainen, *principal*
Aidan Lai Chak Chong
Jude Littlefield Buschlen
Sean Liu
Danylo Tkaczyk

Flute
Rowan Froh
Rachel Roe-Wu
Anwen Robertson
Eleanor Song

Piccolo
Rowan Froh
Eleanor Song

Oboe
Jason Fan
Jasmine Noone
Nicholas Pomares

English Horn
Jason Fan

Clarinet/Eb Clarinet
Marco Ding
Farimah Khorrami
Niki Tang

Bass Clarinet
Cheng Cheng

Bassoon
Kelton Hopper
Taran Massey-Singh
Jaclyn Yee

Contrabassoon
Taran Massey-Singh

Horn
Anik Caissie
Julia Fowell
Finn Parks
Dia Tam

Trumpet
Justin Ko
Grace Locker
Andrew Mendis
Shaw Nicholson

Trombone
Benjamin Glauser
Duncan MacFarlane
Ethan Whitlow

Bass Trombone
Benjamin Glauser

Tuba
Harrison Greenaway

Timpani
Elyssa Arde
Madison Keats
Yi-Hsuan Lo

Percussion
Elyssa Arde
Johnathan Huard
Madison Keats
Yi-Hsuan Lo

Piano
YuLing Chen

PROGRAM NOTES

Tannhäuser Overture
Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

The overture to *Tannhäuser* is a popular orchestral work in its own right and is more often than not performed as a stand-alone work. Using the theme from the 'Pilgrims Chorus' from Act 3, the slow and solemn opening highlights themes that will be prevalent throughout the opera. The rich and sonorous opening shows masterful orchestration as the woodwind gently layer on top of the rich strings. As Wagner introduces the brass in there is a much grander feel within the music. As the orchestra build towards the climax of this theme, different sections of the orchestra take on a new part of the melody.

The opening lyrical section is then juxtaposed by a faster section, which shows the different temperaments of the two main German legends. The flickering motifs add the sparkle of the mythical side of this story. Themes from Venusberg are heard, which represents the mountain where the goddess Venus has hidden. The violins lead this tune, which also becomes a pinnacle aspect later on in the opera. Wagner's rich textures carry through and the bright melody pings across the top of these tick orchestrations.

As the music slows down once more, a solo clarinet plays the 'Venus Call', which is based on material heard in the previous section. This tranquil section soon leads back to a reprise of Tannhäuser's opening hymn. As the climactic finale is being prepared you hear distant themes already heard in the overture. Now fully-realised, the music gradually builds in texture, harmony and dynamic to create a big effect during the last few pages of music. The bold brass add to the drama with their sharper sound piercing the cascading violin motif. The brass lead the way through as the frantic strings reach new heights in shimmering effects. The brass unite for the final few chords as the orchestra end back in the home key in an epic conclusion to this popular overture.

Program notes by Alex Burns, 2020

Fantasy on a Theme by Beethoven
Larysa Kuzmenko (b. 1956)

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned me to write an eight-minute work, featuring the oboe, inspired by Beethoven's Symphony No.1. I chose to write a theme and variations loosely based on the main theme of the first movement. (Beethoven's original theme is C G B C C, while my version is D Ab C D D.)

The theme goes through different permutations, but remains recognizable, largely because of its shape and rhythm. The work opens with the theme being presented in a fugal texture by the strings alone. There are variations that feature the solo oboe, and others that feature horns, trumpets, and even timpani, which, appropriately, was the first featured as a solo orchestral instrument by Beethoven in his ninth symphony. The biggest challenge when writing this piece was being restricted to Beethoven's instrumentation-the orchestra in the classical era was much smaller than the contemporary orchestra. My other orchestral scores generally include trombones, bass clarinet, tuba and a variety of percussion instruments.

Program notes by Larysa Kuzmenko, 2019

Finlandia
Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Finlandia is an orchestral tone poem, the last and most famous, of a set of pieces describing episodes in Finnish history. It was written for an event celebrating the Finnish press, which was in reality a disguised protest against Russian censorship. The original title was "Finland Awakes". It was premiered in Helsinki in 1900.

Sibelius is often cited as the musical voice of Finland's struggle for independence from Russian rule and Finlandia is perhaps the most successful and popular nationalist piece that he wrote. In the early days performances were clandestine affairs. A number of different names were chosen for the piece to deceive the Russian authorities. These included "Scandinavian Choral March" and "Awakening of the Finnish Spring".

The piece begins with a slow threatening introduction played mainly by the brass instruments depicting the tyranny of Russian rule. A short episode transitions from discontent to determination and leads to the main allegro section describing a call to arms and uprising. It broadens out into a gentler lyrical section, sometimes called the Finlandia Hymn, before the allegro returns to bring the piece to a jubilant triumphant ending.

In keeping with other composers of the Nationalist period in music, Sibelius made extensive use of folksong idioms. Indeed many commentators have thought that the Finlandia Hymn was based on a traditional Finnish song. However no sources have been found for it, and it is now thought to be Sibelius' own invention.

Program notes by The Portobello Orchestra

El salon México
Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

From the time of Copland's first visit to Mexico City in1932, when his friend Carlos Chávez took him to the colorful nightclub called "*El Salón México*," Copland wanted to compose a piece about the unusual dance hall. He said, "I was attracted by the spirit of the place and by the Mexican people. Using Mexican melodies seemed appropriate. My purpose was not merely to quote literally, but to heighten without in any way falsifying the natural simplicity of Mexican tunes." Much to Copland's surprise and delight, *El Salón México* was welcomed warmly in Mexico and has consistently been one of his most performed pieces. He said, "Never in my wildest dreams did I expect this kind of acceptance for the piece!"

Program notes by Vivian Perlis, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PERFORMANCE COLLECTION
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CONCERT OFFICE
Eric Chow, *supervisor*
Cory Bertrand, *front of house coordinator*

PERFORMANCE OFFICE
Amanda Eyer Haberman, *performance assistant*

BIOGRAPHY

Larysa Kuzmenko is a Toronto-based composer, pianist and Juno nominee. Her music has been commissioned, performed, broadcast and recorded by many outstanding musicians all over the world. She has appeared as a pianist in several countries, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, St. Lawrence Centre, England, USA, Roy Thomson Hall, Massey Hall and several other Canadian venues. She is currently on staff at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where she teaches piano, harmony, and composition.

Her works demonstrate a strong affinity towards the mainstream of classical music. She imbues her music with a strong melodic sense, and a firm rooting in traditional, albeit extended tonal processes. She has been awarded commissions from the Ontario Arts Council, CBC, Laidlaw foundation, and from private commissioners. She was a composer in residence at the Memorial University in Newfoundland in 2010. Her music is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Plangere, and Frederic Harris. Her solo piano works "In Memoriam to the Victims of Chernobyl" and "Mysterious Summer's Night" have become standard repertoire for pianists. These pieces receive over a hundred performances a year. Her choral works "Winds" and "Stars" are performed regularly all over the world with sales of over a thousand copies a year.
In 2011, Larysa received a Juno nomination for her "Piano Concerto" which was recorded on CD by well-known Ukrainian Canadian pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico. Most recently, she was commissioned, through a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, to write a work for the Toronto Symphony's 90th anniversary. This work, "Behold the Night" was composed for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Children's Choir. It was extremely well received by the audience and was broadcast on CBC. Oscar winner Christopher Plummer was on the same show as the premiere of "Behold the Night". During the after show dinner, he told the composer that "Shakespeare would have been very proud of Larysa Kuzmenko's musical setting of the text to 'A Midsummer's Night Dream'". Critic Colin Eatock from the Globe and Mail wrote, "The work is as charming and colourful as any film score by Danny Elfman or John Williams".

Some prominent ensembles and soloists who have performed her works include, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, directed by Peter Oundjian and Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra directed by Bramwell Tovey, Thunder Bay Orchestra directed by Jeoffrey Moule, Gryphon Trio, Composer's Orchestra directed by Gary Kulesha, cellists Shauna Rolston, Kristine Bogyo, and Kaori Yamagami, pianists Anton Kuerti and Andrew Burashko, the Elmer Esler Singers, and the Elora Festival Singers just to name a few.